

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for propelling a gurney across a supporting surface comprising: A a control/handle module, A a cord charger module, A a drive module, A and a chassis assembly for mounting the drive module under a chassis of the gurney, said drive module comprising: Electrical wiring harnesses, Pneumatic tubing, and Mounting means

a drive wheel connected to an electric motor for rotating the wheel,
said drive wheel mounted for rotation between pivot arms attached to the chassis assembly,

said pivot arms resiliently biased by a spring such that the drive wheel is out of contact with the supporting surface,

an air bag for selectively biasing the pivot arms against the resistance of the spring such that the drive wheel is in contact with the supporting surface,

said air bag connected to an air compressor under control of an air pressure switch for controlling the air pressure in the air bag

whereby the gurney is propelled across the supporting surface by the drive wheel when the drive wheel is in contact with the supporting surface.

Claim 2 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 1 wherein said having a control/handle module to provide provides means for maintaining directional and speed control over said gurney.

Claim 3 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 2 wherein said control/handle module may be swung 180 degrees down from the operating position in order to facilitate loading or unloading said gurney.

Claim 4 (original). A modular drive unit for a hospital gurney according to claim 2 wherein said control/handle module utilizes a coating on the handle to afford a non-slip grip for the operator.

Claim 5 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 2 wherein at least one control/handle module contains all necessary means for a single operator to control a gurney's speed and direction of travel.

Claim 6 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 1 ~~having a~~ wherein the cord charger module ~~to provide~~ provides means to recharge batteries.

Claim 7 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 6 wherein said cord charger module mainly comprises at least one cord reel.

Claim 8 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 7 wherein said cord charger module contains mounting means to secure it to said gurney.

Claim 9 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 6 wherein said cord charger module contains mounting means for interlock switches selected from hydraulic, electrical mechanical and pneumatic interlock switches which interact with standard linkages common to said gurney.

Claim 10 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 9 wherein said interlock switches control the presence or absence of electrical power and air pressure to said modular unit.

Claim 11 (canceled). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 1 having a drive module which retractably contacts a floor surface and provides means to propel said gurney in any selected direction and speed.

Claim 12 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim ~~11~~ 1 wherein said drive module comprises a drive wheel having a self-contained electric motor, gear, and tire unit which will move forward and reverse at variable speeds.

Claim 13 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim ~~11~~ 12 wherein said ~~drive module comprises a pneumatic air spring~~ which air bag when selectively inflated forces said drive wheel in sufficient contact with ~~a floor~~ the supporting surface to avoid slippage.

Claim 14 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim ~~11~~ 12 wherein said ~~drive module comprises an air compressor and~~ air pressure switch ~~to maintain~~ maintains the inflation level of said ~~air spring bag~~, irrespective of the relative distance between the ~~floor surface~~ support surface and the gurney chassis, causing said drive wheel to exert the same force on the floor.

Claim 15 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim ~~11~~ 12 wherein said pivot arms of the drive module ~~comprises~~ include a lock plate arrangement to adjustably capture ~~the axes~~ an axle of said drive wheel in order to maintain its position relative to the rest of the drive module, and to prevent rotation of said axles.

Claim 16 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 1 ~~having a~~ wherein the chassis assembly ~~containing~~ includes a battery box, a control circuit board assembly, and means to mount said drive module.

Claim 17 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 16 wherein said chassis assembly is designed to mount to the frame of an existing gurney without modifying said gurney.

Claim 18 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 16 wherein said battery box provides space for at least one rechargeable battery and contains a cover to reduce the possibility of water or other contaminants entering said battery box.

Claim 19 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 16 wherein said control circuit board assembly provides an interface between said control/handle module and said drive module.

Claim 20 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 1 containing an electrical wiring harnesses which provides all necessary electrical power and features quick-disconnect fasteners for ease of installation, maintenance, and battery replacement.

Claim 21 (original). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 1 containing pneumatic tubing which provide all necessary air pressure and feature quick-disconnect fasteners for ease of installation and maintenance.

Claim 22 (currently amended). A modular drive unit for a gurney according to claim 1 containing mounting means to attach the modules to each other and to the host gurney, said mounting means including but not be limited to: screws, bolts, nuts, washers, lock washers, and nylon tie wraps.

Claims 23-96 (withdrawn).